

Chord Structures Lesson

Triadic Chord Structures part 1

I'm going to show you some musical theory, but I'm going to make it so simple, that you'll be amazed at how easy this stuff is. It all depends on how its delivered to you. I'm going to keep it really simple. I have devised a way for any guitarist to understand this.

1. First of all, you have one note. Simple. A note is a note. One, uno - no more no less.
2. two notes stacked together, are not quite a chord. They are referred to as an *interval*, but we will use this term loosely, because there are many sub-forms of intervals.
3. A chord is three notes or more.
4. A chord containing three notes is a *triadic chord*, hence triad (3).

A three note triadic chord has four structures that are very easy to form. They flow in this order:

- a) *Major* triad or basic triad
- b) *Minor* triad
- c) *Diminished* triad
- d) *Augmented* triad.

A Major triad is the "mother" of these structures. The major triad contains the following notes of a major scale. The 1st note (known as a *tonic* - the "root" note), the 3rd note and the 5th note.

Simply put, if we wanted to make a G major triadic chord, we would build it from the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the G major scale. So G would be our 1st note.

In the next section, I will show you the G Major scale and how to find these notes. I will then show you in that section, how to flat or sharp the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes accordingly, in order to create a Minor triad, Diminished triad and Augmented triad. its very, very easy. For now, I want you to take this information and temporarily forget about it.

I have compiled two sections of notation below. The first section shows you all of the major triadic chords, starting with the G Major triad. It spans an octave, ending on the next G Major triad.

Basic Major Triads

Gtr I

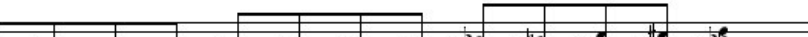
T

A

B

The 2nd section shows you all of the Minor triadic chords, starting with the G Minor triad. This too, spans an octave. Starting with the major triad chord section, finger the chords and play all of them, one at a time. Repeat this process several times. You will find, that the pattern is the same. You do not need to alter your fingering. You will only have to slide the fingering up a fret at a time.

Basic Minor Triads



Gtr I

T															
A	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
B	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		

Memorize this pattern.

Next, move on to the Minor triadic chords. You will see that the pattern is almost identical. Only one note is altered. Play all of these chords several times through. Memorize THIS pattern. Go back and forth between playing the major triads and the minor triads, comparing the structures of the patterns.

Triadic Chord Structures - Part 2

Last time we were talking about Triadic chord structures. I showed you the Major triad formation and a Minor triad formation, and I had also promised to show you the next two. The Diminished and Augmented variations of those structures.

If you had played through the chord formations that I had given to you, you would have seen a common pattern, both in the Major triad structure and the Minor triad structure. Well, the good news is that the Diminished and Augmented versions of the chords are no different. What's the bad news? There is none! that's more good news.

As I had explained before, a triad is constructed from the major scale, by taking the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of that scale and playing them together to sound the chord.

The last example was in G, but this time we're going to start in G# - the 4th fret on your low E string.

I'm going to go ahead and show you the Diminished and Augmented chords. They will run one octave like last time, spanning from G# to G#. Go ahead and play them through a few times and then when you're done, consult the Major scale at the bottom. Play it through a few times and then after that, consult the formulas for creating the Major, Minor, Diminished and Augmented triadic chords. Using the formula (which, is very straight forward) and the scale, see if you can't recreate these chords using a little detective work. I know you can do it! You may make a few mistakes at first, but after a little focusing, the notes will jump right out at you.

Gtr I

T													
A	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
B	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14

Gtr I

T													
A	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
B	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

The *G# Major* scale

Gtr I

T													
A	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
B	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

The Formula Is:

Major triad contains (1 3 5) of a major scale.

Minor triad contains (1 b3 5) of a major scale.
Diminished triad contains (1 b3 b5) of a major scale.
Augmented triad contains (1 3 #5) of a major scale.

Note: Start with the G# Major triad chord. 4th fret on the low E string, 3rd fret on the A string and 1st fret on the D string. Come back to this chord if you get lost. Try to find these notes in the G# Major scale above. Once you feel like you understand how these notes structure this chord, start build the other chords off of this one. After you get the hang of it, try it else where. You can use the Major scale pattern anywhere, starting on the low E string.

Power Chords

If you already know how to play power chords, and a lot of you do, you might as well read this article to find out a little bit more about them.

First of all, power chords are thought to be used primarily in heavier styles of music. It is true that it is present in metal, rock and punk genres of music, but traces of it can also be found in Andalusian style Flamenco. Dave Mathews was also quite fond of the chord structure and his musical influence were the sounds of South Africa, which makes you wonder.

It is not called a power chord because it is used in powerful forms of music, instead it gets its name from the fact that it uses the power to the 5th.

A power chord is either a Major or Minor triad, except that the 3rd that is found in a triad, is left out.

The formula for creating a power chord is different than the formula for creating a triad. The formula for a Major triad are the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the Major scale.

The power chord formula are the 1st, 5th and 8th notes of a major or minor scale.

What gives the power chord such a full sound is the fact that the 1st and 8th notes are the same note, so it doubles the sound. The 8th note is optional and is not always used, however, the 8th note is also an octave of the root (1st). To add the 8th note gives it an even fuller sound. Take a look at the below illustrations. They are structured out of A.

The image shows the A Major Scale in 4/4 time. The scale is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The notes are A, B, C, D, E, F#, G, A. Below the staff, the scale is broken down into three parts: the first part (A, B, C, D, E) is labeled 'Oct I 1st', the second part (F#, G, A) is labeled '5th', and the third part (A) is labeled '8th'. The notes are circled in red. Below the scale, the power chord is shown on a three-staff system (T, A, B). The notes are A (T), B (A), and D (B), which are the 1st, 5th, and 8th notes of the A Major Scale. The notes are circled in red.

The image shows the A Minor Scale in 4/4 time. The scale is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The notes are A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A. Below the staff, the scale is broken down into three parts: the first part (A, B, C, D, E) is labeled 'Oct I 1st', the second part (F, G, A) is labeled '5th', and the third part (A) is labeled '8th'. The notes are circled in red. Below the scale, the power chord is shown on a three-staff system (T, A, B). The notes are A (T), B (A), and D (B), which are the 1st, 5th, and 8th notes of the A Minor Scale. The notes are circled in red.

You will notice that it does not matter whether or not you construct a power chord from a major or minor scale. The 1st, 5th and 8th notes don't change between the scales.

The chords are simple yet unique in that sense. They are unique because the aspect of major or minor depends on the modulation of the chords. Simply put, it all depends on the melodic structure of a song. A way of looking at would be that the chords are chained together as notes in the progression of a particular scale.

7th Chord Structures

7th chord structures present a very unique sound and can give any musician a unique perspective on their playing, especially when 7ths are mixed with other chord structures.

The 7th chord is generally used in *Jazz*, *Blues* and *Latin* music, but there are many ways to incorporate its pure sound into other genres of music.

To be honest with you, 7th chords are not hard to learn, but there are so many principles that apply. That is why I have chosen to keep this entry simple.

I'll show you the formula for creating a Major 7th chord out of any major scale and I will do the same with a Minor 7th chord. Keep in mind that this article is a follow up to the last one, which was about *power chords*.

So, to start you off in the wonderful world of 7th chords, I'm going to show you the easier variations of them. I'm going to show you *barre 7ths*. I'm doing this because they are very similar to the power chord structure, yet they still retain the 7th sound, and much like the power chord, the fingering changes little.

Let's get started!

The *Triads* and the *Power chords* were both similar in the sense that those structures were created from taking 3 distinct notes from the major scale, to construct those chords.

This time, with 7ths, you are using *4 distinct notes*.

The Major 7th formula (1, 3, 5, 7)

The Minor 7th formula (1, b3, 5, b7)

The image displays two musical staves. The top staff shows the C Major Scale in 4/4 time, starting on C4. The notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, and C. Red arrows point to the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th degrees of the scale, labeled '1st', '3rd', '5th', and '7th' respectively. Below the staff, the notes are written as whole notes with their corresponding fret numbers in parentheses: C (3), D (5), E (7), F (3), G (5), A (7), B (4), and C (5). The bottom staff shows a C Major 7th chord, which consists of the notes C, E, G, and B. The notes are written as whole notes on the staff.

C Minor Scale - can be done with C Major Scale as well

The 3rd note is flatted, going from the 7th fret to the 6th fret now.

I have, as usual, posted the major scale with the actual notes defined. If you want to do a little "homework" feel free to locate these notes on your guitar and make an attempt to arrange them into the proper chord. Its not rocket science - I always rely on my ear when I feel a little confused at times and training your ear is better than theory.

One thing that you should realize is that the barre chord versions of these founding 7ths present a slightly different sound, in terms of voicing. Eventually, we will cover as many of the 7th chord structures as possible, but there are a lot and there's so much to discuss outside of chords. In the mean time, this should wet your appetite until we come to that bridge.

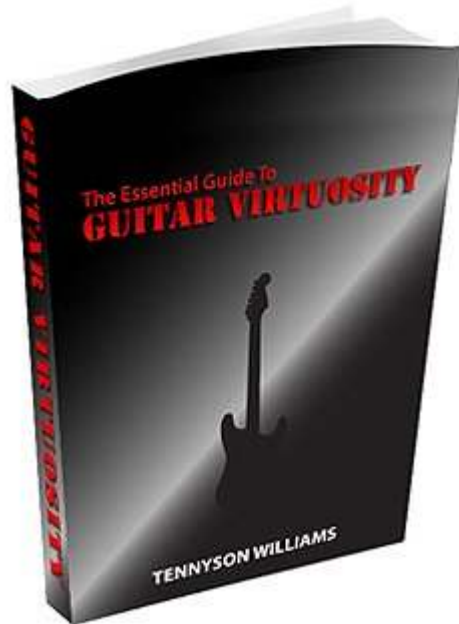
Major 7th chords starting in F and ending in F

Minor 7th chords starting in F and ending in F

This concludes the lesson on chord structures, and hopefully you've learned a lot. One more thing – do you need to give your playing a bit of a boost? Need to get some coordination down to play killer licks? If that's the case then you may want to check out

<http://www.guitarspeedsecret.com>

Where you can get your copy of The Essential Guide To Guitar Virtuosity, which is a speed training work book that has tons of information and exercises.



Check Out

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